

# UPDATE

## **Obesity Increased in 1999 and Continues to Climb in 2000**

The prevalence of obesity in the United States grew in 1999, representing a serious public health threat to millions of Americans. Obesity rose 6 percent nationally between 1998 and 1999, and the increase affected all regions and demographic groups and most states. Since 1991, obesity among adults has increased by nearly 60 percent nationally. Obesity is defined as having a body mass index of 30 or higher. A BMI of 30 in most cases means an individual is about 30 pounds overweight.

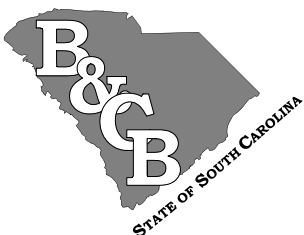
Certain subgroups had increases in obesity that exceeded the national rate. Individuals 30 - 39 years of age and individuals with some college education had a 10 percent increase in obesity between 1998 and 1999. A recent study by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that diabetes in the 30 - 39 age group increased by 70 percent in the 1990s. Among racial/ethnic populations, the largest increase was found among whites, which had a 7 percent increase in obesity. Overweight and physical inactivity accounts for more than 300,000 premature deaths each year in the U.S., second only to tobacco-related deaths.

In order to control the obesity epidemic the CDC suggests that:

- Workplaces should offer healthy food choices in their cafeterias
- Workplaces should provide opportunities for employees to be physically active on site
- Schools should offer more physical education that encourages lifelong physical activity
- Urban policymakers should provide more sidewalks, bike paths and other alternatives to cars
- Parents should reduce their children's TV and computer time
- Parents should encourage outdoor play and proper nutrition

It is recommended that anyone who may have a medical condition and/or obesity should consult their physician before beginning any type of physical activity and to receive information on proper nutrition.

Source: Obesity Continues Climb in 1999 Among American Adults, Center of Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA 30333.



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